

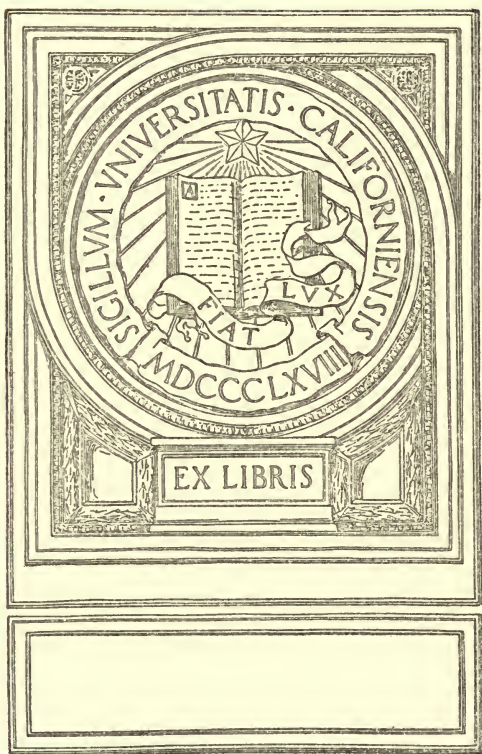
A
DREAM OF
LILIES

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KATHERINE E. CONWAY



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A DREAM OF LILIES.



A
Dream
of
Lilies

By Katherine E. Conway

H. G. Cupples
Company



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Dedication

To the sweet memory of
my sister Helena
who was taken from earth
in the spring-time of her years
and the beauty of her innocence
when the Lord went down into His garden
to gather lilies.





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(vi.)





A Dream of Lilies.

SHE dreamed that on a hilltop bright and stilly,
A garden girt with thorny hedges grew,
Wherein no flower bloomed but the pure white lily;
Over it smiled far Heaven serene and blue,
And fair, all fair,
Lilies and buds and leaves beyond compare.

And many a morn she sought that garden gladly
To gaze upon the lilies sheltered there;
And, when the shadows lengthened, left it sadly,
Sighing, "Would it were opened to my prayer!"
Alas, Alas!

The piercing thorns kept guard—she could not pass.

Not dulled by cold delay, but fiercer growing,
Her longing and her yearning—quenchless fire—
Till flesh and spirit, all entranced, were glowing
With the resistless flame of her desire.

And then, one day,
It burned through circling thorns her eager way.

(1)





Out of her glad heart singing swift she entered,
Nor recked she of the earth-life's drear eclipse—
When lo! on One her tranced gaze was centered,
And the song faltered on her trembling lips—

“ Oh, who art Thou
With loving, sorrowful eyes and kingly brow?

Oh, who art Thou among the lilies dwelling,
Looking with tenderest pity upon me,
In majesty the sons of men excelling ;
Where'er Thou movest, see, how joyfully
Upon their stem
The lilies tremble as Thou smilest on them !

“ Oh, give me of Thy lilies, I entreat Thee—
Here I would hide me from earth's gaud and glare,
And at the gates of Life Unending meet Thee,
Bearing the lily-bloom unstained and fair,”

—Then, murmured He,
“ Wouldst bear the lily, thou must follow me.

“ And, oh, remember that the way is dreary,
Thorn-strewn and rough where'er thy feet are pressed ;
And often thou wilt falter and be weary,

(2)





And then there will be none to bid thee rest."

—But still, she said,

"Oh, let me follow whither Thou hast led.

"I care not though all sorrows press upon me ;

Darkness nor storm no more affrighteth me ;

For Thine exceeding loveliness hath won me,

And all things are as naught except for Thee—

And, even so,

Whither Thou goest, Belovéd, I will go."

Then from its stem He brake a fair white lily

Dew-gemmed and fragrant, and He gave it her—

There in His blessed garden, bright and stilly—

And she sank breathless ; then light winds astir,

And, instant shone

A deeper glory-light—and He was gone.

Gone, too, the lily-garden erst so blooming,

Gray was the sky above and chill the air,

And the bleak earth the joy of life entombing,

No trace of vanished flower or leafage bare.

And all alone,

She wept the bliss foregone she might have known.

(3)







“Oh, maiden, for thine answered prayer art grieving?”

Spake a clear voice. Then she beheld afar
An angel with white wings the still air cleaving—
And on his brow there blazed a radiant star—
Nigher and nigher,
He came, and held unsheathed a sword of fire.

“Love bade thee choose the lilies, rise and cheer thee.
Love bids me guard thee; lo! I walk beside,
Unseen, henceforth, though ever, ever near thee.”

“And will thou never leave me, then?” she cried.

—“Wilt surely stay?”

“Lo, I am with thee till thy dying day.”

But though she rose, her will to Heaven resigning,
And though the task God gave her was undone—
For that dear Visible Presence she was pining—

“Naught,” she said, “gladdens me beneath the sun.

When shall I see

Mine own Belovéd in Eternity.”

* * * * *

She woke. Sad dreams and glad alike have ending,
And oft we're fain to weep when glad ones go,

(4)







But since her dream a strange, sweet peace is blending
With all her work and will—and even so—
She's fain to deem
The lily garden was not all a dream.

(5)







Inadequate.

THE least of loving is in having, dear ;
To-morrow you will wake to weariness,
And shrink, betimes, in heart-sickness and fear,
Ah, woe ! from hands that now you'd kneel to kiss.
You'll wake to your life-dream fulfilled, aghast ;
Would God this dream, as other dreams, had passed !

The least of loving is in having. Light
Night with a firefly ; quench the flame that glows
From thirst for the Exhaustless, Infinite,
With the small dewdrop in the heart of a rose.
The best of loving will be having, never,
Till, having All, you're sure of it Forever !

(6)





Lost Labor.

I.

Oh, Giver of all good gifts! What render we
Again to Thee of all Thy hands have given?
What hast Thou of our strength, O God in Heaven?
Thou gavest the singing voice—what songs for Thee?
When most we fear Thee, a presumptuous leaven
Pervadeth all our prayer. Or, niggardly,
We grudge Thee what a friend hath full and free,
A thought at dawn of day, a word at even.
Lose not your patient sweat, O fashioners
With plane, or drill, or chisel—though the men
Of fairer face and softer hands forget.
They err, but the All-Knowing never errs.
What matter, when the work's done, plane or pen,
So the heart's will to God's dear Will was set!

II.

Who gathereth not with me, he scattereth ;
Who standeth not with me, against me stands—

(7)





Beating the air with unavailing hands ;
His work is idleness, his life is death—
So warnest Thou, Christ, Lord of all lives and lands,
In whom our hope, yea, even our daily breath.
Oh, what men's praise ?—a wind that fluttereth
The choking, blinding, burning desert sands
Oh, what avails it that is not for Thee,
That spreads not every day the boundaries
Of Thine Earth-Kingdom : sets thy flag aflame
On farther heights and headlands ? Oh, that we
Should lose for paltriest seeming all that is,
For time's exalting, risk eternal shame !





Old Years' Ghosts at New Year's.

"A HAPPY NEW YEAR and many!"—one or ten or a score?—

Till the old life's done and the new begun where we reckon by years no more!

'Twere sweet to rest nor question, here at the fateful gate.
Unmindful of the years gone by, as of the years that wait.

Oh, but the dead, lost years to-night, like souls in drearest pain,
Grieve for all life's vain vigils, vain love and labor vain.

"Where are the crowns of glory our pallid brows should wear?
Where the immortal fruitage our empty hands should bear?"





Where are the songs of triumph it should be ours to sing?
What shall we plead for you and for us when we come
before the King?

Redeem us, oh, redeem us! and if you will—ah, well,
The time that is left is so short at best that every day
must tell.

Late, seeing the end of the world in your fair shrines
lightning-riven,
In the signs in the sun and moon, in the stars that fell
from Heaven—

Stricken, shattered, sore-hearted, you shrank from the eyes
of men,
Moaning, 'O God! is Heaven the chance to begin
again?'

But lo! the love of His Heart and the mercy of His
ways,
To whom the days are as ages, and the ages but as
days—

(10)





Again the New Year dawneth—again the wondrous
grace—

And still in your hands our ransom you hold for a little
space.

But one year more, or many?—the time is short at best,
Redeem us, oh, redeem us ! the restless dead would
rest.”

(11)





A Convert.

PRAISE ! Friend, in sooth,
You do me grievous wrong.
I had my youth,
Yea, and my youth was long.

Fame, beauty, gold,
Lovers—a score.
What lips so bold
As whisper change in store,

Fell a dark day
My pleasant paths across,
Love fled away
From pain, and shame, and loss.

Passed from friends' ken
Alone the thorns I trod ;
All failed—and then
I gave myself to God.

(12)





* * *

Oh, my short years,
With lost years to retrieve ;
Oh, wasted tears,
Now real griefs are to grieve.

Praise ! win me grace
From my past's accusing eyes.
Praise ! hide my face
From Angels' sad surprise.

(13)







New Land and New Life.

Behold, your quest is ended,
And the New Land strange and splendid,
No longer luring from afar, is firm beneath your tread ;
And the way is free before ye,
The skies unclouded o'er ye,
And the past is dust and darkness, and the dead have
earthed their dead.

Raise your cross and raise your altar,
Why shrink ye thus, and falter ?
Are ye men, or love-lorn maidens ? ye late were stern
and brave.

What's worth a strong man's weeping ?
The New Land hath in keeping—
Guerdon for valiant battle that the Old Land never gave.

Have done with fruitless yearning,
Know ye not there's no returning ?







The wrathful sea's between ye and your far-off fatherland.

The worst it threatens brave ye?

Now from yourselves I save ye—

Lo, the ships that brought ye hither ablaze upon the
strand.







The Kings and the Star.

We have seen His Star in the East, and are come to adore
Him,
King of the kings of the earth, and who is before Him?
Show us where He abideth—love without measure
We would lay at His royal feet with the wealth of our
treasure.

Long have we followed the Star, and at last it is resting
Over yon hill. We are slow for all of our hasting.
Minutes move leaden-winged when the quest is ending,
And the mists melt slow that show faith and fulfilment
blending.

But is it for this we've left power and place and treasure—
The clinging wives and the little ones, the paths of our
kingly pleasure?
Oh, the changing and losing and dying ere our returning!
Naught to be ours as of old, for all of our yearning.

(16)





King?—A weakling babe—Queen-mother?—a maiden
lowly—

Palace? A cave in the rock. Yet, Lord Almighty, All-holy,
We see through the veils; thou art King and none is be-
fore Thee,

And we've seen Thy Star in the East, and are come to
adore Thee.

What shall we have, great King, for our thrones for-
saken?—

Sudden their lips are mute and their spirits shaken.

Is it the Christ-Child's answer? are they divining
Aught of a coming woe in His eyes' clear shining?

* * *

Ah, beyond the hearts of rock, love's patient labor defying,
Beyond the sword and the block, and the pangs of the mar-
tyrs' dying,

They followed the Star again, and again they found the
King;

But now to share in the glory of His endless triumphing.





A Brave Man's Hope.

From the French of Louis Veuillot.

I HOPE in Thee, O Christ ; on earth I never
Blushed for Thy Cross nor Thee ;
And on the Judgment Day, before Thy Father,
Thou wilt not blush for me.





A Prayer of Shadowed Hearts.

THE grief, long dreaded, nears us. Mother, see !
How the weird shadows hide the sun's warm glow !
Ah, by thine own unutterable woe,
When the sharp sword of Simeon's prophecy
Rended the veil 'twixt Calvary and thee,
And then transpierced thy soul ;—(for, even so
Our shrinking and our shuddering dost thou know !)
Comfort us with thy pity motherly,
And make us wise in time. Too oft, alas !
The mercy of God's sword we would not see,
Nor His supreme love-token in the Cross,
We blindly let the hours of sorrow pass
Void of fruition for eternity,—
The while the wondering angels wept our loss.





Christ in the Wilderness.

THOU hast gone out from Nazareth's shelter sweet,
From Mary's mother-love, so pure, complete,
Over a long and drear and perilous way,
Into the wilderness to fast and pray.
Wherefore, my God, must all this anguish be?—
Meekly Thou answerest—"For thee, for thee."

Art Thou not weary of the desert bare—
The rock and sand and sun, the blistering air?
Were not the rivulet to Thy parched lips balm?
Yearnest Thou not for the green, sheltering palm?
Art Thou not lonely, dearest Lord,—ah, me!
Though hosts of angels bear Thee company?

One slender shade is in the desert-land,
The shadow of the Cross athwart the sand:
But sharp and clear and present to Thine eyes,
The awful agonies of Calvary rise.
The Cross's shadow greateneth for me—
Ah, but the cruel nails are all for Thee!

(20)





O mystery of untold tenderness—
A boundless, shoreless sea Thy love's excess!
O I could weep methinks in Heaven above
To see my Maker pleading so for love!
Tempted and tried and sorrowing for me—
Lord, can Thy lowliest do aught for Thee?

(21)







“Behold, Thy King Cometh.”

O DRESS thy tent with lilies and with palms,
Robe thee in marriage-raiment white and holy,
And greet His coming with rejoicing psalms,
Who hath not scorned to choose a bride so lowly !

Go forth, upon His pathway gladly flinging
All the poor treasures thou hast deemed so fair ;
Behold ! He cometh from the Orient, bringing
Sceptre and crown for His beloved to share.

O favored one ! all lesser loves forsaking *
(Frail must they seem to thee, and cold and dim,)
Fly to thy King, nor falter, swiftly breaking
The bonds that strive to hold thee back from Him.

But thou art silent ; love, perchance, doth still thee
In trance ecstatic, deepening more and more ;
Yet bliss diviner draweth near to thrill thee—
The King's bright heralds pass thy threshold o'er.

(22)





* * * * *

Why, on thy marriage-day, in mourning languish ?

Lo, He is come at last, thy Spouse, thy King !

Why look on Him in white and wordless anguish ?

Why weep ? Those tears are not love's welcoming.

His sad eyes meet thine own, in mercy heeding

Thy soul's wild agony reflected there,

Shrink'st thou because His fair white brow is bleeding

Under the royal crown His bride must share ?

Shrink'st thou because His choice means pain unspoken,

Shadows and tears, dread changes, bitter loss,

The sword unsheathed, sweet bonds forever broken ?

Shrink'st thou because His sceptre is a cross ?

(23)





Consummatum Est.

Do I wake or dream? Is it sight or seeming?
Dying—the sword uplift and gleaming?

I am fair and strong.

I had planned me a day serene and long.

Is it ended quite——

Planning and labor and love's delight?

O Lord. Life-Giver, Life-Cherisher, see
The little lives that have need of me,
Hearts bound in mine.

By the love of that human Heart of Thine,
Tender for all,
The awful word of Thy power recall.

My kindred dear

Are not in Heaven, but all, all here——

Oh, much to live for and much to love,

Hast Thou given me, God above!

Over and done!

Why, the best of my life is but just begun.

(24)





Not yet at its noon
The sun of my summer-time—soon, too soon,
Thou art calling me.
O Lord of Time and Eternity,
What are a score of years to Thee ?
Stay the hand on the dial—
Nay, no denial !
I would live, I would live—I've lived true to Thee—
Have pity on me !

* * * * *

No respite, none !
Then, God, if it must be, Thy will be done.
Ah me ! Ah me !
Through the dusk of this drear eclipse I see
The dear, dead Christ,
For me and my Heaven sacrificed,
White on the Cross the Atonement dread
Consummated.
Let me hide my face in the dust at His feet
While the last hours fleet.
I will trust His love for the life that's done,
And the life begun.







Christ and the Mourners.

Down on the shadowed stream of time and tears,
Voice of new grief and grief of ancient years—
Sad as when first from loving lips 'twas sighed—
“Hadst Thou been here, my brother had not died.”

Comfort us, Lord, who heardest poor Martha's plaint,
Heal the sore heart, uplift the spirit faint—
O Thou, the Peace that cometh after strife !
O Thou, the Resurrection and the Life !

Why didst Thou take the love we leaned on so ?
We know not, but hereafter we shall know.
Speaks now our faith, through tears Thou wilt not chide,
“Most wert Thou here when our belovèd died.”







At a Grave on Easter-Day.

Credo in Resurrectionem Mortuorum.

I KNOW the sting of death—its victory—
Since one more dear than mine own life is dead ;
And I can never more be comforted,
Whatever love may come in years to be,
Till God give back what Death has wrenched from me.
Yet, ye would slay my hope. Who was it said
“ There is no resurrection for such dead,
What thou hast lost hath perished utterly ? ”

False seer ! my dead shall live again, I know.
Those eyes once oh, so kind ! shall smile again ;
And the dear hands that wrought but good to me,
Hold mine in warm close clasp. I can forego
Life's solace, and be patient with its pain
Until the day-break and the shadows flee.





Not out of Sight.

So sad in life, even when thy lips were smiling,
Those comforting, compassionate eyes of thine ;
So eloquent, another's pain beguiling,
“ Lo, my friend grieves, and all his grief is mine.”
Who knew thee came to thee in trust unbounded—
Was ever depth thine own soul had not sounded ?

I wonder is it joy to thee in Heaven,
Oh, loving, helping, giving—now to know
The love and grief to thy dear memory given.
Thou art not gone—we cannot let thee go—
Beyond our reach—ah yes !—and crowned with light,
But still in sight—oh, never out of sight !

And shall it be in vain, oh, dear befriender ?
Nay, ours the blame, if thou no blessing bring.
Thou art unchanged—man-brave and woman-tender
And Christ-like merciful and pitying.
Look with remembering eyes to God, while we
Look on thee and grow faintly like to thee.

(28)





The Prayer of St. Bernard of Clairvaux.

A FREE TRANSLATION.

REMEMBER, Mother, throned in Heaven's splendor,
That never on this earth has it been said
That any heart which sought thy pity tender
Was left un comforted.

So, wearied of world-friendship's changing fashion,
And bankrupt of world-treasures utterly,
And trusting in thy mercy and compassion,
I come at last to thee.

Why name to thee my needs in my entreating—
Thou, taught in human hearts by the Divine—
Long time ago, when soft His Heart was beating,
Fond Mother, close to thine !

O plead with Him who on thy breast was cherished,
Sweet sharer in the world's Redemption Pain !
O let it not be said that I have perished,
Where none came yet in vain !

(29)





The Church of the Sacred Heart.

Lord, to Thy glory this new-risen shrine !

We've given our best and know it all unmeet—

We'd strew our lives like flowers before Thy feet,
And still be Thy glad debtors, Love Divine.

'Tis ours and Thine—font, bier and altar-throne ;

Our best of earth and all of Heaven meet here—

Fair bride, sweet child, and old dead mother dear,
The sinner shriven, the weak to saint's strength grown.

All-Giver, what are our poor gifts to Thee ?

And what are we that Thou shouldst crave our love,

And prize Thine own—given back in sign thereof,
As father with his child's gifts tenderly !

With pity for our poverty atone,

And, even as Thy Heart hath shared our grief,

And craved, like ours, for comfort and relief,
Share with us here, our love hath built Thy Throne.

(30)





Lotus and Lily.

SOMETIMES a dark hour cometh for us who are bound to
bear

The burden of lowly labor, the fetters of lowly care.

An hour when the heart grows sick of the work-day's
weary round,

Loathing each oft-seen sight, loathing each oft-heard
sound !

Loathing our very life, with its pitiful daily need,
Learning in pain and weakness that labor is doom indeed.

And this the meed of the struggle—tent, and raiment
and bread ?

Oh for the “Requiescant,” and the sleep of the pardoned
dead !

Oh the visions that torture and tempt us (how shall the
heart withstand !)—

The fountains and groves and grottoes of the Godless
Lotus-land !

(31)





Oh the soft, entreating voices, making the tired heart leap,
“Come over to us, ye toilers, and we will sing ye to
sleep.”

A fatal sleep, I trow ! but we are sad unto death,
And the Lotus-flower unmans us with its sweet and bane-
ful breath.

We look to our fellow-toilers—what help, what comfort
there ?

They're bowed by the self-same burden, beset by the
self-same snare.

Falleth the ashen twilight—meet close for the dreary
day ;

Hark to the chimes from the church-tower !—but we are
too tired to pray.

Ah, God, who lovest Thy creatures, sinful, and poor and
weak,

Hear'st prayer in the tired heart's throbbing, though the
lips are too tired to speak ?





Is this Thy answer? Is this the herald of Thy peace?
For the Lotus withers before him, the songs of the Syrens
cease.

And the palm-trees and the grottoes, fountains and
streamlets bright,
Waver and change as he cometh, then fade from our
weary sight.

He is worn with care and labor; he is garbed in lowliest
guise,
But we know the firm, sweet mouth, and the brave, brave,
patient eyes;

And we know the shining lilies—no blooms of mortal
birth—
And we know thee, blessed Joseph, in the guise that was
thine on earth.

Thy hands are hardened with toil, but they have toiled
for Him
Upon whose bidding waited legions of Seraphim.

(33)





Thy hands have trained to labor the hands of Him who
made thee,
Whose strength upbore thy weakness when thy awful
trust dismayed thee.

Oh lift thy hands in appealing for us who, unwilling, bear
The burden of God's beloved, lowly labor and care.
Oh pity our fruitless tears, to-night, and our hearts too
tired for prayer !





Truce.

STAY, thou art tired ; thy Father bids thee rest.
Tarry awhile beneath the palm-trees' shade,
Eat of the fruits around thee, unafraid,
Drink of the limpid stream His hand hath blest.
After the sore, sharp struggle comes a guest,
Sweet Peace, with respite even as thou hast prayed.
Rest, till refreshed and with new strength arrayed
To face the old-time perils. Short at best,
This welcome truce. Yet linger not, but swift,
Go forth when thou art summoned, else I fear
Thy joy will turn to grief ; the hot, red sand
Over the delicate flowers will drift and drift
And choke the stream, now purling crystal clear,
And change the garden to a desert land.







In Sight of Home.

THE shore's in sight, the shore's in sight !
The longed-for lights of Home I see !
I sing, for very heart's delight—
And you, my friend, thro' dark and bright,
I know that you are glad for me.

It was a stormy voyage, friend :—
And dare I dream the worst is o'er ?
Drear presages of hapless end
Dismay me not ;—yet Heaven defend !
Ships have gone down in sight of shore.

I ought to be afraid, I know,
My wayward past remembering ;
Yet, calmly into port I go,
Whose “ Sursum corda ” cheers me so ?
How is it I am fain to sing ?





Is it because my Mother stands—
The Virgin-Mother, fair and wise—
Just where the waves break on the sands,
Reaching to me her welcoming hands,
Lifting to God her praying eyes?

* * * * *

O friend, I'm drifting from your sight—
The Home-lights brighten momentarily—
Yet lift once more your signal-light,
In answer to my last good-night,
And tell me you are glad for me!

(37)





Chosen.

SWEET, oh sweet, the voice that calling
My reluctant soul enthralling
With unearthly melody—
Now in sleeping as in waking,
Through my dreams its music breaking,
Seemeth thus to say to me :

Leave, oh leave, thy girlhood's dreaming,
Leave the bright world's changeful seeming—
Drop life's many-colored woof ;
Leave the flowers of love to wither,
I have called—oh hasten hither—
Leave thy father's sheltering roof !

Come, beloved, I will lead thee,
And with food from Heaven feed thee,
In the desert waste and drear ;
From the noontide heats I'll shield thee,
At my word the rock will yield thee,
Living water cool and clear.

(38)





Did I ever aught to grieve thee,
Did thy hope in me deceive thee ?
Now I call thee, but in vain !
From mine arms in fear thou fleest,
In the love that claims thee, seest
Life-long fetters, life-long pain.

O belovèd, why delayest ?
Still I call, and still thou strayest,
Wearily, so wearily—
And with pitiful endeavor,
Seekest rest that never, never,
Wilt thou find except in me !





Vanquished.

For a Nun's Profession.

YEA, vanquished am I—thrall'd at last, and bound !
Vain, vain to strive against the Strong—all vain
The toil, the tears, the weariness, the drain
Of hot heart's blood from many a cruel wound—
Lost, lost for Earth and Heaven ! But lo ! I've found—
I, a veiled captive in His triumph train,
Joy that effaceth memory of pain.
“Thy days,” the world said, “run in dreary round ;
Naught hast thou gained, but much hast forfeited.
Art thou not fain—speak true !—again to be
Unfettered on the flower-strewn pathway broad ? ”
“Ah, tighten these dear bonds,” I shuddering said—
“My Conqueror, but not mine Enemy,
Nay, but my Friend of friends, my King, my God ! ”





My Father's House.

*"Lætatus sum in his quæ dicta sunt mihi : domum Domini
ibimus."*

THOU hast pitied my heart's great needing,
Thou hast stooped to my low estate,
And opened unto my pleading
The long-sealed beautiful gate.

Through the wilds of gloom and sadness,
Thou hast been my guide and guard,
Into the light and gladness
Of the courts of Thy House, O Lord.

Why should I fear or falter
Under a roof so blest?
Here, near Thy holy Altar,
Surely Thy child may rest.

Here in Thy House it endeth
My quest that was erst so vain,

(41)





For the Spirit of Peace descendeth,
Stilling the olden pain.

In Thy House, my Father, never
Is grief that burns and stings,
Nor the anguish of lost endeavor,
Nor the shadow that chills and clings.

For Thy love makes rest of labor,
And gain of the bitterest loss,
And the glory and joy of Thabor,
In the shade of the drearest Cross.





Misprized.

I HAD a lovely pearl—a wondrous one—
The rarest, purest pearl in all the land.
Oh, my dim eyes that saw not how it shone!
I dropped it in the dust, nor mourned it gone;
But kissed the flaunting flowers in my hand.

To-day—oh, late and vain or tears or prayer!
Oh, late and vain, lost pearl, my fondest quest!
Though now, at last, I know thee radiant fair,
And now I know thee sweet beyond compare—
Now that thou shinest on another's breast.





An Altar-Lamp.

O SHINING meek and shining bright,
An Altar-Lamp, indeed !
With ready, tender, helpful light
For groping wanderer's need.

Without the temple-walls he stands,
His heart is sore with sin ;—
Through pictured saints' outreaching hands
Thou beckonest him within.

Into the House of Christ the Lord,
The wanderer's rest from roaming—
Where robe and ring and festive board
Await his longed-for coming.

Sweet beacon-light, what joy is thine !
I breathe, in far-off greeting ;—
So near, so near the Heart Divine,
Thou tremblest with its beating.

(44)





More joy to thee will yet be given,
When comes the Eternal Rest ;—
Christ's Altar-Lamp on earth, in Heaven
A star upon His breast.

There, shining meek and shining bright,
Wilt know, O fair and dear !
• How many a Heavenward-leading light,
Thy flame enkindled here ?





A Life's Regret.

O LONG-LOST friend, what have I harvested
Of thy youth's bloom and mine, with its delight
Of love and laughter and fore-runnings bright?
Not peace, not hope, but life-long pain instead.
Sometimes this sleepeth, till I dream it dead—
When lo! a word, a look, a soft-drawn breath,
And into fullest life it wakeneth,
Ah, me! unrested and uncomforted
For all its sleep. How could I let thee stray
Into the vale of death, thy torch unlit,
And mine ablaze that might have kindled it?
Oh, what befell thee on that fearsome way?
And oh, what greeting would be thine to me
Could thy voice reach me from eternity?





A Christmas Rhyme.

HE came unto His own, but His own they knew Him
not.

Were the portents all misread? Were the prophecies
forgot?

For the Mother-Maid no mother opened her door in
pity—

No room for David's Heir in the homes of David's City—
The herald Star unnoted, the angels' song unheeded;
The Lord of all with His creatures in vain for shelter
pleaded.

HE came unto His own—but ah! they looked for a King
With armies and waving banners and thunders of triumph-
ing,

To smite His people's foes from the face of the shuddering
earth!—

What! this the Promised, the Long-Desired, this Babe of
humblest birth—

(47)







No babe was lowlier cradled since ever the first drew
breath—

Ah, me ! in scorn rejected—veiled Lord of life and death !
Just Heaven ! and we dare to chide them ! Are we wiser,
keener-eyed,

Less prone to measure the ways of God with the little
line of our pride ?

Now, as of old, Christ comes to His own, and His own
receive Him not,

Through the crowded city streets He fares, seeking a
resting spot.

If the King but came in His beauty, we had found His
coming sweet,

And strewed our prized and precious things in the path-
way of His feet.

But to know Him in His lowliest—in the orphan child
forlorn,

The crippled beggar, the outcast, whom the untried
virtuous scorn—

Ah ! this is test and touchstone—thrice blesséd he who
stands—





He shall laugh in the latter day, with the Kingdom's
keys in his hands.
We open hearts and homes to Thee. Oh, make us brave
and wise !
And strengthen, on this Christmas Eve, our dim, short-
sighted eyes,
That we may know Thee, Lord, whate'er Thy sad or
strange disguise !





“He did it unto Me.”

WE read the sad, sweet story of the life of Christ on earth,
And murmur through fast-flowing tears, “Ah, Lord,
Thou’st hadst no dearth
Of all our love could yield Thee, had only we been there!
Our homes, our hearts, our labor’s fruit—what joy with
Thee to share.”

We read the sad, sweet story—“Whate’er ye do” (saith
He)
“To the least of these, My little ones, ye do it unto Me;”
But we somehow miss its meaning, and somehow we
forget
That, in His homeless little ones, Christ walks among us
yet.

In them He suffers hunger, in them He is a-weary,
In them is cold and shelterless, astray in by-ways dreary.
Shall we go peaceful, happy, nor fear a taint of sin,
While we ope no door in pity to let the Christ-Child in?

(50)





Go, spread your wings, sweet angel, bright messenger
from Heaven !

Go, whisper unto every heart the gracious promise given ;
Christ judgeth not by honors, world-fame, or gold or glory—
List to the solemn warning of the holy Gospel Story :

What time ye stand before Him in the awful judgment
day

When Earth and Heaven, fire-tried, like a scroll have
rolled away,

They pass, but He remaineth, and this your test shall be,
“ As ye did unto the least of Mine, so did ye unto Me.”





Rending The Veil.

I THOUGHT that white veil hid a sacred shrine ;
I thought it hid the white flame that can rise.
Only from fire of purest sacrifice
Lit from the Lord's own Altar. It was mine
To dream fair tracery of sheaf and vine
Upon that baffling veil which jealously
Shrouded—Ah, what of holiness ?—Ah, me !
How many a blessed day did rise and shine
On my vain dreaming.—Well, I dream no more
Of victim, altar-fire, and sanctuary ;
I hear no more sweet anthems for the wail
Of my awakened heart repenting sore.
O bitter fruit of knowledge ! Woe is me !
Would God that I had never rent the veil !





The Shrine Profaned.

How is the fine gold dimmed, the kingly purple faded—
The light of the sun in the midday heaven by mists
malign o'ershaded !

The stones of the temple scattered—the gems of the
inner shrine

Trodden down in the mire, and the sacred cups pro-
faned with the heathen's wine !

I thought I had died to see it, but that was when I
forgot

The Strength that is Almighty, and the Love that sleep-
eth not.

Now I rest in His arms unfearing ; in Him is my heart's
trust.

The sun will pierce thro' the poison-mists, the gold is
under the rust ;

And the stones and the gems re-gathered, a temple far
more fair

Than the one I loved, will arise at last to the patience of
my prayer.

(53)







The Heaviest Cross Of All.

I'VE borne full many a sorrow, I've suffered many a loss—
But now, with a strange, new anguish, I carry this last
dread cross ;

For of this be sure, my dearest, whatever thy life befall,
The cross that our own hands fashion is the heaviest
cross of all.

Heavy and hard I made it in the days of my fair strong
youth,

Veiling mine eyes from the blessed light, and closing
my heart to truth.

Pity me, Lord, whose mercy passeth my wildest thought,
For I never dreamed of the bitter end of the work my
hands had wrought !

In the sweet morn's flush and fragrance I wandered o'er
dewy meadows,

And I hid from the fervid noontide glow in the cool, green,
woodland shadows ;

(54)





And I never recked as I sang aloud in my wilful, selfish
glee,
Of the mighty woe that was drawing nigh to darken the
world for me.

But it came at last, my dearest,—what need to tell thee
how?
Mayst never know of the wild, wild woe that my heart is
bearing now!
Over my summer's glory crept a damp and chilling shade,
And I staggered under the heavy cross that my sinful
hands had made.

I go where the shadows deepen, and the end seems far
off yet—
God keep thee safe from the sharing of this woful late
regret!
For of this be sure, my dearest, whatever thy life befall,
The crosses we make for ourselves, alas! are the heaviest
ones of all.





The Christmas Thorn.

—“ Where the winter thorn
Blossoms at Christmas, mindful of Our Lord.’

For your sorrowful Christmas Day
What word can I dream or say,
That will not mock the desolate house where you sit and
grieve apart ;
Or whence you look, I know
On thorn and flint and snow,
While the worst of the thorns, ah me ! are sheathed in your
bleeding heart.

Oh, I mind one Christmas night—
A long-ago delight—
When together we smiled or sighed over stories quaint
and old ;
And that of the winter thorn
A-bloom on Christmas morn,
Comes back to me to-night as the sweetest ever told.

(56)





Oh, you will not shrink to hear
The word that it gives me, dear,
For the empty house and the desolate heart, and the tears
that must have way :
“This the poor thorn’s renown,
I made the only crown
That He ever wore on earth, who is Lord of the Christmas
Day.

And I blossom on Christmas morn,
Remembering He was born
With the heart of man to suffer and the hands of God to
heal.
Oh joy, for the barren places,
The dreary, storm-swept spaces,
Where the sudden flower and vine will the paths of His
feet reveal.”

Sad heart, whatever I do,
I cannot comfort you,
For through mine own tears I see the light of the Christ-
mas morn.

(57)





And so, my sweetest friend,
The only word I send
Must be cheer for you and me alike—the word of the
Christmas thorn.





Success.

AH ! know what true success is. Young hearts dream,
Dream nobly, and plan loftily, nor deem
That length of years is length of living. See !
A whole life's labor in an hour is done ;
Not by world-tests the Heavenly crown is won—
To God the Man is what he means to be.





Columbus, the Knight of Faith,

HE gave a world to men—
What word of mortal ken
Immortal praise best saith,
Oh, praise the Knight of Faith!

“ Oh, for a shorter way,”
Cried the men of pillage and fray,
“ To the unsearched Ind afar,
Where the treasures of ages are.

“ A short way thither must be,”
Spake Columbus steadfastly,
“ And its perils I will dare
For a prize beyond compare.

“ To more than ye dream or name
I will trace a way of flame,
Oh, quest of the Crucified!
Oh, souls for whom He died!

(60)





“ And well may the diamond shine,
And the red gold in the mine ;
For a pledge in my hands they’ll be
Christ’s Sepulchre to free.”

Oh, the way to the Land Unseen
Is the Way of the Cross, I ween.
Seeking it, youth was spent,
Seeking it, manhood bent.

Seeking it long years, came
Little but scorn and blame,
The taunt and the bitter word—
The pain of hope deferred.

But vain to quench or dim
The fire in the heart of him
Whose way to the Land Afar
Was lit by God’s own Star.

Not to far Ind, great soul !
Thine was a grander goal,
Meet for the grandest faith,
Say it with fearless breath,

(61)





Since theirs, who followed from far
The Lord Christ's wonderful Star,
Lighting and guiding them
Till it stood at Bethlehem.

Not thine to free Christ's Tomb,
But Christ's people—through the gloom
Thy path for the feet of Faith
To the souls that sat in death.

Thine to plant, with flag unfurled,
The Cross on the fair New World,
And the fruit of that seed to be
Earth's noblest liberty.







In Thanksgiving.

At last ! at last ! Oh joy ! Oh victory !
But not to me, my God, ah, not to me,
But to Thy Name the praise, the glory be !

At last ! at last ! but when was prayer unheeded ?
And more wouldst Thou have given, had more been
needed,

For purer lips than mine my cause have pleaded.

O trust, that trembled on the verge of failing !
O timid heart, at shadowy terrors quailing !
Spending thyself in conflict unavailing !

Dear God, forgive ! my fears are shamed to flight ;
O'ershadowed by Thy mercy and Thy might,
I rest, in humble-hearted, still delight.

Oh teach me song to praise Thee gladsomely,
Whose strong hands cleared the tangled way for me,
And saved me from the snares I could not flee !

(63)





Fain would I linger under skies so fair,
Too happy here, Lord, in my answered prayer,
To reck what stars are shining otherwhere.

THE END.

(64)





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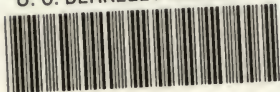
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